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will stick; nor is it in the nature of such rusty machinery as the Bureau of Construction and Repairs to stir fire. Perhaps the stout shoulder of her assistant builder may start the ship yet.

The East River below Hell Gate, and the harbor and bay were comparatively clear of ice yesterday. The prevailing north and north-east winds have driven much of it out to sea. What is above the Gate cannot so easily escape.

The steamship *Erlsson*, which sailed on Saturday last for Havre, remained anchored at Quarantine yesterday, on account of the severity of the weather.

CORRECTION.—The statement that Stonington Harbor is closed by ice, and frozen across to Fisher's Island, is incorrect. There is not ice enough at Stonington to prevent the free departure of the steamers from that harbor, the only obstruction being the great accumulation of floating ice at the head of the Sound.

As soon as an opening is made there the boats will resume their regular trips. The harbor of Stonington, owing to its favorable location, has not been closed by ice since the steamers commenced running there in connection with the Stonington Railroad, and consequently that route has frequently been kept open when the others were blocked by ice.

The Commodore lies at her pier No. 2, North River, and the C. Vanderbilt at Stonington, ready to start as soon as the state of the Sound will admit.

THE STEAMER PLYMOUTH ROCK.—This vessel is still ashore at Hart Island. She is all ready to be set afloat again, but, owing to the accumulation of ice around her, she cannot at present be got off.

NAVAL.—The United States frigate *Potomac*, Commodore Paulding, arrived at Havana on the 20th inst., and the United States steamer *Fulton* on the 22d.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS.

## POSTAL REFORM—MASS MEETING OF MERCHANTS.

A large number of merchants met at the Merchants' Exchange, yesterday afternoon, to take into consideration such measures as might be deemed necessary to improve the Postal System.

THOMAS TILSTON, esq., as announced in the Call took the chair, and, on motion of R. L. STEWART, Royal Phelps, Stewart Brown, George Griswold, and Simon Baldwin, were appointed Vice-Presidents, and George H. Moore, Pliny Miles, and Saml. D. Babcock, Secretaries.

MR. TILSTON then addressed the meeting as follows: FELLOW CITIZENS: We have convened this day to consider a most important and interesting subject—one that has occupied the attention of thinking men in all parts of our country; and I trust that before we adjourn some measure may be adopted to carry out the great plan in view, which, in my opinion, will prove of immense advantage not only to the present generation but for all future time. Perhaps there is no institution that requires greater reformation than our Post-Office system; and if the highly-intelligent audience that I see before me will lend their co-operation, the foundation of a new and improved system will be laid.

superstructure will soon appear. The rapid increase of our population—the great extent of territory now occupied, call aloud for cheap postage, in order that frequent communications may pass from one extreme of the Union to the other, so that the business of the country may be conducted with ease and economy. The change of thought that the whole fabric of our Government rests, the Treasury of our country is now full, and I may add, overflowing, and for one I am willing to see it depleted, if it is necessary to produce such a revolution in our Postal system that letters may pass from one end of the Union to the other at a price not exceeding the cost of the letter itself.

TYGHEBROOK, esq., read the following resolutions: Resolved, That the condition of our Post-Office system is entirely inadequate to meet the wants of the country, and is discreditable to the Government. Resolved, That, in order to make the system what it ought to be, it is necessary in the opinion of this meeting, substantially to reorganize the present system. 1.—UNIFORM POSTAGE OF TWO CENTS ON LETTERS, without regard to distance, and a cheap uniform rate for collected money orders and letters in cities and principal towns.

2.—RECEIVING-HOUSES AND LETTER-CARRIERS for the collection and delivery of letters in cities and principal towns, without extra charge.

3.—MONEY-ORDERS, for sums not exceeding \$25, to be drawn by the principal Post-Office on each order.

4.—Carriage of newspapers, books, and other light postage to be charged on all mail matter not pre-paid.

5.—ALL DEAD LETTERS TO BE RETURNED TO THE WRITERS, and never to be destroyed.

6.—The Postage on all FRANKED MATTER TO BE PAID BY THE GOVERNMENT.

Resolved, That a Committee of fifteen be appointed, with power to call a public meeting, with a view to urge upon the Government the adoption of these improvements, and to correspond with our fellow-citizens throughout the country, and to take such measures as they shall consider necessary for the purpose of securing the speedy adoption of the foregoing resolutions.

Resolved, That the Committee have power to say that they had no quarrel with the manner in which the present system was carried on. The Post-Office Department labored under great difficulties from the imperfections of the present system, and it was against these defects that their efforts should be directed. The only thing which they had to do was to secure uniformity of rate—a uniform rate of two cents per half ounce. This was the case in England, and there it had produced the most advantageous results. It was fortunate for the world that this subject, like all others, had its enthusiasts. England owed the perfection of her postal system to a small number of men, and we owed many of the improvements in our own to Mr. Bates and to Mr. Miles who had taken the trouble to collect the data and desiderata of the postal system, and who had shown that the letter-carrier was equal to the country, with a population of one that claimed a vastly greater average of intelligence than that of Great Britain was only on a third of that collected in that country. This could only be owing to the fact that in England they had regular and rapid transmission of mails and uniform postage. Secondly, they had no letter-carriers, but their mail was carried by stage, and by rail, and by water, and by all the means of rapid communication which we had at our command. They had no letter-carriers, but their mail was carried by stage, and by rail, and by water, and by all the means of rapid communication which we had at our command.

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## MARINE AFFAIRS.

THE STAM-FRIGATE NIAGARA.—The public desire to know why the Niagara was not launched. Some time has elapsed since her builder, Mr. George Steers, announced her as ready to take to the water, but nothing has been done. We have accidentally discovered the reason, and hasten to lay it before our readers. On order, it appears, was received from Washington, to the effect that no moneys should be expended on the Niagara beyond the amount specifically appropriated. This sum had been quite spent already, and, accordingly, a requisition was sent to the Bureau of Construction and Repairs, for allow to grease the ways by which the ship was to glide into the water. The order was duly forwarded from headquarters to the officer in command of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and the follow was on the point of being purchased at the current price of thirteen cents a pound, when the information was obtained that somewhere in New-York-Yellow could be bought for ten cents; wherefore the Niagara was not to be launched until tallow defuncts three cents. Will tallow take this fall to oblige us? Or will New-York-Yellow gallantly refuse to be fattened for less than thirteen cents a pound? Until one or the other event happens, we fear the steamship

## THE TENTH WARD KNOW-NOTHINGS

Our Reporter again visited Council No. 5 on Saturday evening. From the calm state of the weather he was in expectation of seeing a large turnout of the brothers, and of course a proportionally large amount of laughable demonstrations. He was disappointed, however, in both. For some unaccountable reason, the prominent scene-shifters and wire pullers were absent, and a mere second-rate entertainment was ladled out. As he is of a philosophic turn of mind—disposed to be pleased with anything—he fished out enough of the “funny” to be an ample reward for his attendance.

At 8 o'clock p. m. Bro. WHEELER, the new President, called the Council to order. The reading of the minutes of the previous meeting showed the aptness of Bro. Corson for reporting, as he had incorporated all the speeches of the brothers into his minutes. It seems that he was fearful of our report might be adopted instead of his own, and he had exerted himself so as not to be outdone. He did well—really well. He *must* be valuable as a reporter for *The Express*.

Under the head of “New Business,” Bro. Corson read a long preamble and resolutions, which he said were based on the report of the Nineteenth Ward Council (No. 15) in *THE TRIBUNE* of Friday last. The point of the resolutions was to censure Council No. 15 and Council No. 93, (Mount Vernon,) for taking Van A. Dooley into the Order. Bro. C. said that both those Councils well knew that Mr. Dooley was no American—that he was merely imported to save the Know-Nothing Aldermen from violating their “obligations” in voting to confirm him for Assessor; that it was well known in the Order that he had been nominated to a place which had been promised to several members of the Order. The resolutions were passed unanimously.

It appears that young Joe, by his conduct in Council No. 15, has stirred up all the old wrath of the Brotherhood. Our reporter thought last week that things were getting quiet; but it proves to be the quiet before the hurricane. The little joker had best see to the brethren at Albany, lest in the revamped Charter the Commissioner of Streets will have a very short term to serve.

After passing the resolutions, Bro. JACKSON moved that James W. Barker be censured for accepting the position of President of a “Live-Oak Club.” The PRESIDENT declared the motion out of order. Bro. JACKSON appealed from the decision. The PRESIDENT put the question on sustaining his decision, and not being able to decide, a count was called. He then asked those in the affirmative to rise. They did so, and hereupon a man behind a big nose, by the name of HALL—driver of ponies, and sometimes called “pony Hall”—jumped up and said he had not come to make a speech, but he wanted to know how to vote. He hoped the reporter of *THE TRIBUNE* would take down his speech. He hoped the brothers would not quarrel like a pack of Puddies. He wanted some dinner—chicken pot-pie, was going to turn out on the 2d of February with his ponies—the (the ponies) *know something* when they get the flags in their ears. Hoped the brothers would all come out with “new hearts”—no animosities. Said his ponies were as good Americans as anybody. “Now Brothers,” said he, “do come out with right feelings on the 2d of February.” After again exhorting the reporter to take down the whole speech, the nose disappeared. To the astonishment of the Brotherhood, he did not repeat his doggerel.

“John Alcock I will not care, But things else with all my heart; Old Dick has now gone good, and I am glad to see him there. Come, sign the pledge, and live forever.”

After this astonishing speech the PRESIDENT, without telling Bro. Hall how to vote, again put the question, and “nose” came up among the Yens. The Chair was sustained; 24 to 4. After which Bro. JACKSON gave the reasons for making the motion just ruled out. The main point made was that the “Live Oak Clubs” were forestalling public opinion. Bro. J. T. Brooks, the late President, followed in defense of Bro. Barker, and showed logically that Bro. Barker was always right, even when he decided the same question all sorts of ways. Bro. BROOKS illustrated this point by supposing a quarrel a thousand miles distant, and that Bro. Barker heard one side first and decided for that, then heard the other and decided for that. “Would not Bro. Barker be consistent?” said Bro. BROOKS. He then went into a history of a disturbance in the Thirtieth Ward Council, but its pertinence not being perceptible, and its truthfulness not being admitted by those who knew the facts, we purposely omit it. Judging from the solemn quietness which pervaded the room for a moment after Bro. Brooks sat down, our Reporter was satisfied that his able arguments had fully convinced the brothers that they *had* done right in sustaining the lucid decision of Bro. Wheeler. Even Bro. Jackson must have seen his error in offering such a resolution. He will sooner or later learn that while it is perfectly in order to censure Council No. 15 and No. 93, it will not do to censure the Mogul, Oh, no.

Bro. Corson then read from his favorite paper, *The Express*, an article in regard to the selection of one delegate from each Congressional District to the National Council to be held in Philadelphia on the 15th of February next. He said that Bro. Barker advised that such delegate be chosen by a convention made up of five delegates from each council in the district. The suggestion being approved, Bros. Brooks, Corson, Jackson